**Extension Assignment – Ch. 14**

**Connections Across Time & Cultures: The Magna Carta**

**Theme:** Analyzing cause & effect

**Background:**

A charter granted to the nobles and by extension to the commoners by King John at Runnymede on June 15, 1215 after the nobles joined forces and faced him down.  Rather than facing the potential loss of his throne through battle, King John signed the charter.  While he later reneged on many of the particulars, the charter served as the precedent for later laws and democratic practices.

**Assignment:**

1. Locate and read a copy of the Magna Carta
2. Compare the accomplishments of the charter to those made in US Government, including the Declaration of Independence & Bill of Rights.
   1. Consider the following:
      1. Standard of living in medieval Europe compared to today (Wealth, class, education, economics)
      2. The concept of personal property/possessions
      3. Individual rights & freedoms
      4. Rights of women & children
      5. Privacy
   2. What impact did the Magna Carta make on the establishment of our government & does that influence continue today?
3. Today, one of the great debates in our culture concerns the right of privacy.  With technological breakthroughs anyone can invade our privacy.  Should those in power have the right to observe us at all times?  The argument is that if you aren't doing anything wrong, you shouldn't mind.  It will keep you safe from those who do break the law.  The problem comes when the laws change or are vague and simply based on suspicion.  Discuss the effort it takes to maintain freedom and the constant threat posed by complacency.  We live in a world where our liberty is constricting in the name of the common good.  When is it good to forego a freedom and when should we hold on?